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1789

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL AT WINCHESTER,

APRIL 23. 1789. &c.

BEING THE

GENERAL THANKSGIVING DAY

FOR HIS

MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY,

BY THE REVEREND

J O H N M I L N E R, M. A.

WITH NOTES HISTORICAL EXPLANATORY, &c.

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[PRICE EIGHTEEN-PENCE.]



IT will appear from the following discourse, that one object the Author had in view in composing it, was to vindicate his religion, not barely from vague calumnies, but from a direct and severe attack. In order to account however for his making this vindication public, which perhaps has no other merit than the truth of its sentiments, it may be necessary to add, that the attack in question was pointedly and publickly levelled at the writer, and that in so doing, his desire is to lay down before others his political creed, and the touchstone of his past and future conduct. At the same time, it is an act of justice due to the learned and reverend body to which

which his adversary belongs, to declare that from the liberality and favors the writer has experienced at their hands, particularly from those of the higher order, he is persuaded the Gentleman above alluded to is the only one of that body capable of making such an attack, or at least of conducting it in a manner so unfair and inflammatory. Should any persons of the writers own communion be of opinion, that he has entered upon matters foreign to the grave and reserved style of the pulpit, he hopes the consideration of the necessity he was under of directly meeting the charge made against him, of the particular occasion on which the present discourse was pronounced, and of his general obligation of sometimes enforcing the duty of *rendering to Cæsar what is Cæsar's*, no less than that of *rendering to God what is God's*, which he did
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not know how to perform in any manner so effectual as that which he has adopted; These considerations, he hopes, will induce such persons to incline to the opinion of those grave and respectable personages whose approbation he is honored with, and by whose advice he always wishes to be guided.

N. B. The quotations from scripture in the following discourse are conformable to the vulgate, but the references agree with the common bible.

A S E R M O N

Preached on the Day of the

G E N E R A L T H A N K S G I V I N G :

A P R I L 23. 1789. &c.

Videte quod ego fim solus, & non fit alius Deus præter me: Ego occidam, & Ego vivere faciam: percutiam & Ego sanabo, & non est qui de manu mea possit eruere.

See now that I alone am, and that there is no other God besides me: I will kill, and I will give life: I will strike and I will heal, and there is no one who can deliver out of my hand.

DEUT. c. xxxii. v. 39.

IN this passage of the sublime canticle of Moses, the Almighty asserts that essential and constituent attribute of his nature, his own necessary and independent existence, and the consequent dependency of all other beings upon him as the Master of life and death, and the Sovereign Disposer of all human events.

Now though God is equally great and powerful in all the dispensations of his providence, yet to us his dominion and his power appear most extensive, when they are exercised on those to whom the rest of mankind pay homage; whether *he looseth the belt of Kings, or girdeth their loins with strength*; whether *he cutteth off the life of Princes, or bringeth them back from the gates of death* to which

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he had before *conducted them*; On these occasions an enlightened piety sees more distinctly, that the Lord *alone exists* supremely and independently, and that *no one can deliver out of his hand*.

We have lately seen the most striking instances of the supreme dominion and power of the Almighty displayed in the person of one of the most powerful Princes of the universe, our gracious and beloved Sovereign; and this is the day he has appointed for laying his Crown, in the sight of the assembled nation, at the feet of this *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, and bowing down, at once in humble submission and fervent gratitude, to that adorable Being, which *hath killed him and revived him, struck him and healed him*, and *out of whose hand no one can deliver*.

In calling upon us his subjects to join him in this religious duty, with an exemplary humility, he only makes mention of his own personal affliction and deliverance; and were these in fact actually confined to him, yet still as good subjects we could not be indifferent to what so nearly touches our beloved master: but can we forget the favor heaven has conferred upon us also, in restoring health to our Sovereign? Call to mind the grief and consternation that seized on all orders and all denominations of people, when it was pronounced in the highest Assembly of the Nation, that we were no longer under the personal government of GEORGE III. represent to yourselves the perplexity and confusion of the wisest statesmen in that new situation unenlightened by law or precedent, in which
they

they found themselves standing: However melancholy the scene was of public affairs, the prospect was still more gloomy: Call to mind, I say, this public calamity in which we were but so lately involved, in order to judge how much we are indebted, on our own account, to the Divine Providence, for giving back to our ardent prayers, and that sooner even than we dared to hope, a Prince whose amiable qualities we had so long experienced, but the extent of whose worth we never knew till we were on the point of being deprived of it.

In other circumstances, I should content myself with enforcing the duty of entering into the views of our Sovereign, by enlarging on the greatness of the blessing for which we are now called upon to return the Almighty thanks. At another time, perhaps, I should have sat still under a load of calumny, to the pressure of which we Catholics, by long habit, are almost insensible; but to seem a foul blot on the chearful face of the Nation on this auspicious day, to be suspected of disaffection on an occasion that would almost make traitors loyal, to have been so lately pointed out as bad subjects and bad citizens from a quarter whence only the charitable voice of Religion should be heard! This is more than I can bear or ought to bear; on the contrary, I owe it to myself, to you, to our fellow-citizens, and to the Sovereign himself, to endeavour to wipe off the foul aspersions.—I shall therefore set out with proving that Catholics are capable of being good citizens and subjects, before I enter, as I mean then to do, on the peculiar motives that call for their loyalty on the present

present occasion, and the duties implied at all times by a true principle of loyalty.

1. Though the Religion of Jesus Christ be a complete system of morals as well as faith, and comprizes every virtue human and divine, yet it cannot be denied by any attentive peruser of the New Testament, that there is one virtue which is more frequently and more emphatically enforced than any other, and which therefore may be said to form the spirit and character of Christianity: I need not inform you, that this virtue is fraternal Charity, a virtue that has for its object every image of the Creator, but which is chiefly practised, as we learn from Christ himself, * in loving those for whom we feel the greatest aversion. This being avowedly the case, is it not surprising, that Christians should take occasion, from their Religion itself, to exercise the most inveterate hatred against one another? In the case of enmities arising from other sources, there is generally some complaint of injury, or some competition of interests, to account for them; but what injury is it to me that my neighbour is mistaken in the important affair of Religion? If he is wrong and I am right, his is the misfortune and mine the advantage: If I see him hastening on to eternal perdition, there is reason enough to pity him, but none to hate him, or to endeavour to make his present existence miserable. Yet how common is it to meet with a spirit of fiery resentment amongst imperfect Christians of all denominations, against those

* Matth, v. 46.

who

who differ in points of faith from themselves. Innumerable are the evils arising from this unchristian spirit to the persons themselves who possess it, and to others ; amongst the rest may be mentioned, that religious controversies, instead of healing the wounds of Christianity, generally widen them ; while combatants of this description, being more anxious for the honor of the victory, than for the salvation of their antagonists, are careless what arms they make use of, and too often ascribe to them opinions and practices they condemn, instead of confuting such as they actually maintain. It is this unfair mode of contending which Catholics have always complained of, and it is this we complain of in the present instance, in being accused of systematically cherishing that hatred of other Christians, which I just now reprobated, and which I presume is conformable to the tenets of no Church whatever, and of considering ourselves as bound by no ties of humanity, duty, allegiance, or oaths, when they stand in competition with the interests of our Religion. Were these charges true, as they are supposed to be by many of our fellow-citizens, and as they have been proclaimed on a late solemn occasion, I grant the inference that was then drawn would be a very just one, that you deserved to be shunned by your fellow subjects ; and I confess that our pretence of joining in the congratulations of the present day, on the recovery of our Sovereign, would be an insult and a mockery.

But where are the proofs of these charges? Do they occur in our professed doctrinal books, or in the decisions of our Councils? Are

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they drawn from the general conduct of the nations around us? or from the behaviour of our Catholic ancestors? Were our fore-fathers no more than an unprincipled banditti, until the last of the Henries taught them the system of right morals?—Yes, it is boldly answered, it is from our practice on a thousand occasions, that our principles on these several heads are inferred.

It is indeed an easy matter for a Polemic, whose aim is to exclude Catholics from the society of their fellow-subjects, by passing over every shining page in the long history of the Church, and singling out such only as are disgraceful to her; by suppressing the heroic virtues of so many Saints in all ages, and the essential obligations which modern Churches have to the parent Church, in converting them from Paganism, and handing down to them the sacred writings, and the body of their faith and discipline; while on the other hand, he exposes to view, heightened with all the force of colouring, every instance of wickedness or folly that has sullied any of her Princes, Prelates, or Pontiffs; it is an easy matter, I say, by these arts, to leave an uninformed audience impressed with the most horrible ideas of the ancient Church, and of us Catholics who adhere to it.

But when has any one heard from this Chair, or that of any other Catholic Preacher, a long list of crimes committed by Protestants, in order to inspire the hearers with ill-will or jealousy against them? When has it been inferred, that because crimes have been committed by some of their ancestors, that therefore they were really committed
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upon principle, or that modern Protestants are chargeable with them? I appeal to you, my ordinary Audience, if those lessons of universal charity and benevolence, which I have represented as forming the essence of the Christian religion, have not also formed the most essential and ordinary part of the exhortations I have from time to time addressed to you? and, if at any time I have endeavoured to demonstrate the superior excellency of your religion, whether I have ever had recourse to such unfair weapons, or ascribed tenets to others which they do not openly avow in their creeds?—Only we, of all denominations of Christians, are not allowed to lay down our own tenets, but have creeds manufactured for us by others, and are condemned for opinions and practices we reject and anathematize, while every superficial controvertist, who is perhaps ignorant of the theology of his own Church, pretends to know what he calls the *depths* and *mysteries* of ours, better than we do ourselves.—But I will answer more distinctly the three principal charges of uncharitableness, sedition and perjury brought against our Religion.

In proof of the first accusation, the frequency of religious persecution in Catholic States, and the institution of the tremendous Inquisition, is brought forward. But till the formal sentence of the Church, deciding the obligation of inflicting corporal punishment on dissenters from the faith, is produced, we are no more accountable for the blood spilt by Catholic Princes and magistrates on the score of Religion, than Protestants of different denominations are for the
persecutions

persecutions their ancestors have carried on against Catholics, and against each other ;* for surely I need not refer to our present penal statutes to prove, that as severe laws have been enacted to suppress the antient Religion, as ever were framed to prevent new religions from starting up; nor need I refer to our History to shew, that in consequence of these laws full as much blood has been shed by one party as by the other, or to general history to shew, that in many instances Protestants have persecuted one another even to death, when they have been found to fall short of the established measure

* It is well known, how many hundreds of Catholics have been executed, purely for their Religion, under Elizabeth, and the first Princes of the Stuart race. In Scotland Robertson informs us (ad An. 1596.) that the *most moderate* of the Ministers being assembled by the Privy Council, to know whether the Earl of Huntley, &c. might not be admitted to mercy, on testifying their repentance; they answered, that the Civil Magistrate could not legally pardon, what they termed idolatry; and that if the Church was to absolve them, the Prince nevertheless would be obliged to punish them. Who has not heard of Calvin's burning Servetus an Arian Protestant, banishing Bolsec, &c.? of the Quakers being put to death in New England? of Barneveldt being beheaded in Holland, and the illustrious Grotius being left to die in prison for defending those mitigated notions of divine grace, which the established Church and all Lutherans now maintain? I may add, that in this country two professed Protestants were burned for heresy by Edward VI. two by Queen Elizabeth, and two by James I. and that no less a man than Cranmer persuaded the reluctant young Prince first mentioned, to sign the death warrant for that *Auto de fe*, and took the guilt of it on his own conscience.—These instances, which might be multiplied to a much greater length, are not mentioned by way of reproach, but to shew that

Intra muros Illiacos peccatur et extra,

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of orthodoxy. Now whatever plea in defence of his church any charitable tolerating Protestant will set up, I can make the same in behalf of ours; If he says, that many Prelates and other illustrious persons of our Church have, by their pens and their actions, promoted persecution, I can mention as great names on his side, who have had recourse to the same un-apostolical argument. Finally, if he urges, that this spirit, which is the same our Saviour condemned in his Apostles, when they called down fire from heaven on the unbelieving Samaritans*, was the spirit of the men themselves, and not of their Religion, which breathes the pure spirit of charity and peace, I admit his plea, but require that I may be permitted to urge the same in behalf of the Church I belong to.

It is not without reason I ascribe this charitable and tolerating spirit to the Church itself, as in fact she declares, in the very process of condemning heterodox opinions, that her power extends no farther than to censuring such opinions; and so far from claiming a right to inflict capital punishment in any case whatever, she pronounces irregular, and excludes from her ministry, such of her Pastors as are but remotely instrumental in shedding the blood of heretics, or of any other persons†. In confirmation of this idea, I may add, that

* Luke ix. 54.

† It is in conformity with an antient custom grounded on the Canon law, which prohibits Ecclesiastics from being any way concerned in any criminal prosecution, that the Bishops of the established Church, when such matters come before the August Assembly in which they sit, claim a right to absent themselves.

Cardinal Pole, though legate of the Pope, opposed the religious persecutions of Queen Mary, as many others of our most illustrious Bishops have done in similar circumstances, and that the behaviour of two of the most Holy Prelates of the Church, Martin and Ambrose, is constantly celebrated amongst us, and held up for imitation, in actually refusing to hold communion with Ithacus, and certain other Ecclesiastics, who forgetting the lenity of their character, promoted the capital punishment of the Priscillian heretics.

In regard to the Inquisition, I answer, if this were not an engine of state in certain arbitrary governments, to prevent the temporal inconveniencies of a diversity of religious opinions, but an essential part of our discipline, the consequence would be, that it would equally prevail wherever the Catholic Religion prevails, all zealous Catholics would be the warm advocates for it, and the last General Council of Trent would have enjoined its establishment in every Catholic State in Christendom. But every person of common information knows directly the reverse of all this to be true.

I shall answer the second accusation, which tends to prove us to be bad subjects, much in the same manner as I have done the first which hold us out as bad fellow-citizens. No doubt seditious conspiracies and rebellions have been set on foot by Catholics who have made religion an affair of party, and a business of this world instead of the next. In this country in particular, near two centuries ago, a plot of the most infernal tendency was concerted by nine Catholics

tholics of *loose morals and desperate fortunes*, I speak the language of James I. which must eventually have involved the Catholic and the Protestant interests in one common destruction : * but the question is, whether these crimes were committed in consequence of any doctrine of our Church, or even of any idea such traitors might entertain of her doctrine ? Did those persons, for example, who suffered for the share they had in the Powder-Plot, glory in their crime, as the regicides did, or pretend that it was lawful to advance the interest of the Church by such diabolical measures ? No, they bewailed their crime, as they would have done any other they had committed in direct opposition to their conscience and religion.

But have Catholics alone been guilty of such crimes under religious pretences ? or rather have not similar excesses prevailed in Germany, France, Scotland, and most other countries where the Reformation has prevailed ? Has not this country seen its govern-

* At the time of the Powder-Plot, above twenty Catholic Peers sat in the Upper House, for whose safety no precautions appear to have been taken, except for that of Lord Monteagle, who immediately discovered whatever part of the Plot came to his knowledge : but nine persons appear to have been privy to the horrid particulars of the Plot, though about eighty were concerned in the subsequent insurrection. It has always been the opinion of Catholics, to which some Protestant authors have subscribed, that no less a man than Cecil prepared the pit-fall into which these wretches plunged, from a principle of revenge rather than zeal. It appears that Plots were a favorite engine of his political intrigues.

See a remarkable letter on this subject in Gent. Mag. for Jan. 1788.

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ment destroyed, and its King slaughtered, chiefly under pretexts of Religion, and by men who gloried in the name of Protestant? Has not the youngest amongst us beheld excesses that threatened the like fatal issue? yet what Catholic accuses Protestantism of teaching seditious doctrine on the score of these violences? Who amongst us that has been plundered of his property, whose house has been consumed, or whose friends have been terrified out of their reason or their lives, accuses these pretended champions of their religion, of having acted in conformity with its dictates, and not rather in opposition to them? But if after all we are condemned to such signal and lengthened odium, on account of the conspiracy of a few profligate Catholics against the life of James I. the plan of which nevertheless was evidently borrowed from a similar plot concerted by certain Protestant Noblemen, and which actually proved fatal to the unhappy father of this Prince*. It is surely time that amends should be made for signal fidelity of the whole body of Catholics to the immediate successor of James in the day of his distress; † it is time.

* King Henry, Father of James I. was, with his family, blown up, in his house at Edinburgh, by gunpowder, on the night of Feb. 9. 1567, the contrivers of this horrid catastrophe no one doubt to have been Bothwell, Murray, &c. Noblemen of the first rank in Scotland, and the chief promoters of the Reformation there.

† Lord Castlemain has left us a list of two Catholic Noblemen, twelve Baronets, and one hundred and fifty-eight Officers, or men of family, who lost their lives in the Civil War under Charles I. in defence of their Sovereign and the constitution, at a time when the penal laws were executed against them with the utmost severity.

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that reparation should take place for all the acknowledged sham plots laid to our charge; one of which*, trumped up by the men who were contriving the very treason and parricide they accused us of, † caused a torrent of Catholic blood, of the noblest, as well as the meanest sort to be shed, and drove the Peers of our Religion from their hereditary seats in the great Council of the Nation.

But to say nothing of past transactions, which in fact are little to the present purpose, it is asked, what security we can give, especially to a Protestant Government, for our allegiance, while we admit the Pope's Supremacy; and what is to be done, say they, if this sovereign and infallible Pontiff should command us to violate our allegiance, or decide that we are not bound by it? It is true, we admit the Bishop of Rome, in conformity with the opinion of antiquity, to be the head of the Episcopal Order, and his See to be the centre of Catholic union; but let these profound Theologians learn, for the first time, that we do not consider the Pope as an absolute Sovereign either in faith or morality. We shall neither submit to his mandates, when they are in opposition to moral rectitude, as we acknowledge they have occasionally been in past ages, when the Spiritual Power has sometimes encroached as much on the Civil, as at others the Civil has on the Spiritual; nor shall we bow to his particular opinions, should they ever prove contrary to the acknowledged

* Oates's Plot.

† The Rye House Plot.

faith of the Church. The security we can give Government for our loyalty is the same that any other class of Christians can give, our sense of moral duty in general, and our respect in particular for the sacred and indispensable oath by which we have bound ourselves to his Majesty and his legal heirs.

It was at the time of the greatest national distress this Kingdom has experienced during the present century, when a gallant army beyond the Atlantic, which carried the hopes of the nation, found itself involved in inextricable difficulties, and forced to lay down its arms; when the rival nations in Europe, taking advantage of this calamity, were preparing to overwhelm us; when, instead of planning foreign conquests, we trembled for the safety of our own coasts; It was at this moment we presented ourselves before the Throne, to assure our Sovereign, that, under every possible change of circumstances, our attachment to his Government would be invariably the same, and that we were determined to share in its fate. George III. did not disdain our humble address; the oath of allegiance, which before was of a mixed nature, and contained matter foreign to the duties of loyalty, was accommodated to our religious opinions; From every quarter of the kingdom Catholics crowded to give Government this public pledge of their fidelity, and we trust, the delicacy of conscience we previously expressed with regard to the nature of the oath we were to take, was considered as a pledge of the steadiness with which we should adhere to it after we had taken it.

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Still however there are persons ignorant or malevolent enough to assert, that we have never given proof of our having abandoned that impious position, *That faith is not to be kept with Heretics.*—It is for them to prove we ever admitted such doctrine. I know in what General Council it was condemned, but I never heard in what private society of Divines it was ever adopted. I trust however I can produce a proof in point of the most satisfactory nature. Admitting the doctrine in question to have accorded with our religious principles, why have we for these two centuries been exposed to the utmost severity of the law? and why at this moment do we labour under any legal disability at all? It is plain, that nothing stands between us, in our respective stations, and many of the emoluments and honors of Church and State, but certain oaths, tests, and subscriptions incompatible with our tenets; were we even of opinion, that such oaths or compacts might be dispensed with, it is strange that neither the interest of the Church should have prevailed on the Pastors of it to grant, nor our own interest have engaged us to solicit such dispensations; yet it is a striking fact, that these oaths and tests, which, like fortifications, have been thrown round all offices, civil, religious, and military, have answered their full purpose in respect to us*, and perhaps in respect to us alone.

I shall

* Though Catholics are not capable of receiving commissions, yet it is notorious, that at least one third of those brave seamen, that saved this country in the last war, were Irish Catholics. Many also of the landmen, particularly of those last raised, when recruiting

I shall propose an argument equally short and conclusive, in answer to those who, admitting us to have an attachment to the person of our Sovereign, represent us to be of such a grovelling habit of mind, as renders us incapable of ever being attached to that free and happy constitution this country enjoys. On this occasion I will not refer to the example of foreign states, nor to what is now actually passing on the other side of the Channel, but will satisfy myself with asking this plain question. By whom was this beautiful and admired fabric of the constitution planned, and in a great measure executed, by Catholics or Protestants? for surely those darling privileges, which Englishmen so justly glory in, have not been purloined from the Royal Prerogative, since the days of the last Henry, but were claimed as their birth-right, by Simon Langton and the confederate barons, in the time of John, and Henry III. and formed the substance of the

was found so un-productive, were of the same persuasion. With regard to these, a species of cruelty and imposition was practised, chiefly I presume by Officers who gained their commissions by raising men, which reflected dishonor on the Nation, and which, it is hoped, its justice will prevent being repeated in case of any future war.—The men enlisted had frequently no oath tendered to them, except a simple oath of allegiance, the oaths of a religious nature being overlooked; and on the other hand, they were assured, in the most positive manner, they might retain their religion with the profession of arms: but no sooner did they become those pieces of mechanism, which well-disciplined soldiers must ever be, than they were regularly every Sunday moved into the religious assemblies of the established Church, into which, previously to their enlisting, they would not have entered to save their lives.

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laws of the Great Alfred and the Good Edward, for the observance of which the Nation always so loudly called.

2. At length I emerge from the turbid sea of controversy, through which I have been forced to pass, before I could enter on the pleasing subject now before me, namely the particular motives of attachment we have to our present Sovereign: these are such, that if it be allowed on one hand, we are at all susceptible of a spirit of loyalty, and if on the other it be granted, that our hearts are formed of the same soft substance with the hearts of other men, it is impossible for us to be disloyal at present.

We read in the first book of Samuel*, that this illustrious Prophet and Chief of his people, being about to surrender his high trust into the hands of Saul, thus addressed the nation of the Israelites assembled at Gilgal. *Behold here I am, witness against me before the Lord,—whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed?* If after nine and twenty years governing these kingdoms, our beloved Sovereign were to rise in the stupendous temple, in which he this day meets that infinite multitude of his subjects, and to address them in the same terms, would not they actually return, would not they be forced to return, with one voice, the same answer the Israelites did to Samuel, *Thou hast not defrauded us, thou hast not oppressed us?* So far has our Sovereign been from trampling upon the meanest of

* c. xii.

his subjects, that if there is any cause of complaint against him, it is that his innate benignity and mildness has perhaps sometimes made him forget the high dignity he bears, in overlooking insults and injuries, for which the meanest of the people would have demanded severe redress. Need I remind you, how often our Sovereign has been the subject of every species of abuse and calumny, that the tongue, the pen, or the pencil could bestow? or need I mention, with what temper and dignity of mind he has always conducted himself under these provocations, in imitation of another Royal Personage of similar character, when attacked by the envenomed tongue of the flandering Shimei? * Under the reign of George III. it is notorious to the whole world, that every subject enjoys that entire security of person and fortune, which is the grand object of our Constitution. *The people dwell safely, every man under his vine and his fig-tree†*, and no one needs fear any thing but the effects of his own misconduct.

Would Englishmen learn the civil happiness they enjoy under the present reign, let them look back to the history of past reigns, and survey that succession of national misery, which has not been always owing to the misfortune of the times, or to the wickedness of ministers, but too often to the folly or depravity of the Princes themselves. No sooner were the divisions of the Heptarchy healed, and one kingdom formed of the whole, of which this your antient city was

* 1 Kings xvi.

1 Kings iv. 25.

the metropolis, than the Danish Pirates began those scenes of slaughter and devastation, which with little intermission lasted for near two centuries, and which only ended with the entire subjugation of the kingdom. Scarce had we breathed during the mild reign of one native Prince, when the Norman invaders, like a sudden storm, broke in upon us, a fierce people, who kept the nation in constant alarms, either by harrassing the depressed inhabitants, or by their wars with one another. The male line of these Conquerors soon failing, the succession could not be determined without a fresh and more destructive civil war than had been yet experienced, which raged with peculiar fury in this seat of Kings, and reduced it in point of strength and consequence, though not yet in point of dignity, to the rank of the second city in the kingdom*. Which reign of the numerous Plantagenets was not deeply stained with English blood? Victorious as they were over the enemies of their country, yet it may with truth be said, that ten of their subjects bled in their domestic strifes and intrigues, for every foe that fell in their foreign wars. As to the next race of Princes, it might seem they had sucked blood instead of milk from their mothers, so sanguinary were the reigns of most of the Tudors. It is true, the generality of the succeeding Princes possessed more innate mildness, yet such has been the stern temper of the times, that torrents of blood have poured through each reign, from

* See a Dissertation on the Cities which have any time been the Capitals of the Kingdom, in Gent. Mag. Nov. 1788.

the veins of men who were guiltless of every other crime than being of the wrong religion or the wrong party. Only George III. of all the English Kings since the Conquest, during a reign which is already one of the longest upon record, enjoys the glorious prerogative, which he knows how to prize, of never having consented to the shedding of any English blood but that of murderers and robbers; and with respect to these, the only fault that has been laid to his charge, is the God-like fault of too much mercy.

There are parties now, as in past ages, there ever must be in this free nation, and perhaps it is for the benefit of it that there should be, to prevent the State Pilots from sleeping at the helm; but when does the prevailing party now, as in former reigns, pursue their adversaries to the scaffold? When do we hear of poisoning and assassination now making any part of Court intrigues? The most violent partizan would hardly put his political foe to death, could he do it with impunity.

War itself, under the mild influence of George III. has put on a less savage appearance; accordingly acts of forbearance and humanity have been seen in the last war, unknown to former ages, and that greatly contributed to soften that scourge of mankind. The whole world is witness, that our Monarch has not been wanting to the security of his subjects, or to the dignity of his Crown; and I am not afraid to say, that the strength and resources of this nation were never displayed to greater advantage, not even in that splendid and
victorious

victorious war which his Majesty carried on at the beginning of his reign, than in the last severe struggle with the greatest powers in Europe, and the most formidable people out of it combined in a league against us. Yet still it must be owned, that as far as is consistent with his being the Father of his People, George III. is the friend of mankind. His delight is not in shedding the blood of his fellow-creatures, but in improving their minds by extending the limits of human knowledge and ingenuity: accordingly to which of the sciences or the arts has not he proved himself a friend and Patron? His pleasure is not in ravaging fruitful fields, but in cultivating and rendering fruitful such as are barren.—Instead of exploring distant countries for the purposes of avarice and ambition: and thereby encreasing the miseries of mankind; his voyages have been voyages of science and benevolence: to discover the extent of the habitable globe, which he is the first Prince that has ascertained; to compare the revolutions of the heavenly bodies at home and at the Antipodes, for perfecting the important science of navigation; to afford those dissolute persons, who have forfeited the rights of society here, the means of meriting and enjoying them at a distance; finally to bestow the comforts of civil life on the most hidden spots of the Southern Hemisphere, and to scatter on every savage coast those precious seeds, more valuable than the diamonds of Golconda, which will afford the inhabitants a more plentiful and certain sup-

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port, and by attaching them to the scene of cultivation, will lay the foundation for all the benefits of civilization.

It is natural for subjects to 'catch the sentiments and manners of the Prince: accordingly we may stamp on the concluding part of the Eighteenth Century the title of *the benevolent*. What human misery does not now meet with its peculiar remedy? What loathsome dungeon is not now visited to alleviate the distresses of its wretched inhabitants? What low degraded order of society does not now meet with the attention and protection of the highest orders of it? Who in past reigns would have attended to the sufferings of human nature on the banks of the Niger and the Ganges? I do not here presume to enter into the intricate and complex questions of the facts, but certainly the principle on which these enquiries have been instituted is divine, and whatever may be the final issue of them, still they have already diminished, and will probably for ages diminish the sufferings of human nature, in three out of four of the great divisions of the globe*.

When

* If after all the restraints which the exertions of the humane have procured to be laid on the Slave-trade in this country and in the West Indies, and after those which may still be expected to take place, it should still appear on the whole to add to the mass of human misery, God forbid, that either private or public advantages should prevent its total abolition. But, whether this commerce may not, in fact, prevent more human misery than it occasions, and whether the condition of slaves amongst civilized people, effectually protected and cherished by law and religion, as it is hoped will soon be the case, be not superior to that

When Princes are possessed of great and amiable qualities in the discharge of their high duty, men are commonly indulgent enough to

that of the most depressed order of human beings (who alone are liable to be made slaves of) amongst their own pitiless countrymen in Africa, is more than the author can yet determine. Whenever any future restraints take place, one of the first undoubtedly should be to prevent the sacred bond of marriage, sacred even on the sands of Guinea, from being wantonly broken, by separating the parties. The same regulation is equally necessary in favor of the unfortunate slaves of our own country, who are destined to banishment on a distant coast from which it is intended they should never return. Many of the convicts who sailed in the late fleet to New South Wales, were refused permission, it is asserted, to take their wives with them: the consequences of which prohibition are horrible to think of in a civil no less than a religious light.

It has struck the Author with surprize, that no one amongst the generous and humane advocates for the Negro slaves, should have turned his eyes to the myriads of Christian slaves, who are groaning under the yoke of a much severer bondage along the Northern coast of Africa, from the mouths of the Nile to the Atlantic Ocean, amongst barbarians who are equally foes to Christianity and to human nature.—It is true, we ourselves are at peace with these insolent Pirates, but it is a disgraceful peace which we purchase from these ignoble barbarians, by paying a tribute we should refuse to the first Emperor of the Universe, and by affording them the scourge that tears the flesh of our fellow-Christians, I mean naval and warlike stores. What would be the feelings of this Nation, were the Great Louis of France, or the Imperial Joseph, to hold the same language to us, we daily hear from the contemptible chieftains of Mauritania? For proofs of what Christians suffer under Mahometan masters, of the frequent apostacies that take place in consequence of these severities, and of the number of Englishmen who, by one means or another, are reduced to slavery, let the Great Collection of Voyages be consulted, and still more the authentic and artless relation of Joseph Pitts of Exeter, who was himself a long time a slave at Algiers. Many people suppose, that the idea of abolishing Mahometan

to their private faults, and are not much shocked or surprised, if they should not be over attentive to the ordinary duties of morality and religion. In fact so great and numerous are the dangers of royalty, so much exposed is his situation, who sees no one above himself in this world to whom he is answerable for his conduct, that the greatest and the best Princes have sometimes left deplorable instances of their frailty in private life. But the private life of our Monarch will bear as strict a scrutiny as his public conduct. As a father, as a son, and as a husband, he stands unrivalled. His example supports the drooping cause of morality, and seems the only barrier in high life against that overbearing profligacy and sensuality, which have

Mahometan piracy is chimerical and impracticable; but the Abbè Raynal, a qualified judge, is of a different opinion. The reader will not be displeased to see his sensible and humane remarks in his own animated and polished language. “ Mais à quel peuple est
 “ il réservé de briser les fers que l’Afrique nous forge lentement, & d’arracher ces epou-
 “ vantails qui glacent d’effroi nos navigateurs ?—Ce doit être l’ouvrage d’une ligue uni-
 “ verselle. Il faut que toutes les Puissances maritimes concourent à l’exécution d’une de-
 “ seïn qui les interesse toutes également. Ces états que tout invite à s’allier, à s’aimer, à
 “ se défendre doivent être fatigués des malheurs qu’ils se causent réciproquement.
 “ Qu’après s’être si souvent unis pour leur destruction mutuelle, ils prennent les armes
 “ pour leur conservation.—La guerre aura été du moins une fois utile & juste.”

Histoire Philos. & Polit. des Indes. 16.

If the question be, which Christian nation ought to take the lead in this work of general policy, heroism, and humanity: There can be no doubt but it ought to be the first maritime state in Christendom, the nation which has of late so much signalized itself in the cause of humanity.

almost

almost transferred to the cause of virtue, the confusion that naturally belongs to vice.—What need I say more concerning the exemplary temperance, conjugal fidelity, and other congenial virtues of our Sovereign?

Such are the motives which ought to endear his present Majesty to the hearts of his people in general: but can we the Catholics of this kingdom in particular forget that characteristical clemency which has made him the first of English Kings to alleviate that heavy bondage under which we had groaned for more than thrice *seventy years*. Before the reign we were, no more than *hewers of wood and drawers of water*, in the land of toleration and freedom: and yet we were not strangers who had stolen into the kingdom, but the genuine descendants of the men who signed the Magna Charta: we had not invented a new Religion, but only adhered to that which had been preached to our ancestors, when they deserted the worship of Thor and Woden. In past times we seemed destined to bear the odium of every public misfortune, and whenever the passions of the giddy multitude were afloat, their outcry for a severe execution of the penal laws against us was as constantly heard as was that of the ancient Pagans in similar circumstances, devoting the Christians to the wild beasts*. Those violent declamations against the pretended idolatry, systematic perjury, treason and immorality of Catholics, which are now chiefly consigned to

* Christianos ad bestias. *Tertul.*

the most obscure conventicles, then resounded from the first Chairs, and were echoed back from the Senate to the Pulpit. In the mean time the Penal Code swelled to a larger size in every reign, and few doubted that in extirpating us from society, they rendered a service to their country. At length George III. arose, and like an auspicious planet shed his benign influence. It was reserved for him to dissipate the illusion, and to convince the nation, that we could be good citizens and subjects by recognizing us for such: Nor could the frantic outcries of a deluded populace, nor those outrages which threatened the extinction of Government, and even approached the Royal Person, intimidate our magnanimous Sovereign, or induce him to relinquish a measure which was founded in equity and wisdom. Were we then capable of forgetting our beloved Master either in his prosperity or his adversity; could either caprice or interest render us weary of his equitable and beneficent sway, we might indeed justly be accused of having hearts unsusceptible of moral virtue.—But the fact is, whatever may be the whispers and surmises of ingenious malice, we are convinced that our temporal interest and duty go together, and that a change of Government under the present circumstances, would cause that spirit of jealousy and ill will against us, which has of late gradually declined, to revive with fresh fury, without the possibility of such change doing us any good whatever.

3. Having taken this extensive view of the Loyalty of Catholics, I should feel that my plan was imperfect, if I did not endeavour to
direct

direct this principle to its proper objects, by pointing out more distinctly the duties resulting from it. There is the greater reason for doing this as, though every one pretends to the character of a good subject, yet each one contracts or extends the duties of such a character as he pleases; and as there have been times when men have overturned Government, and washed their hands in their Sovereigns blood, under pretences of supporting the former, and defending the latter. I say then, that the first duty of loyalty, which I mention for the sake of perspicuity, but which I have supposed it impossible for you not to comply with, is an attachment to the person and family of your Sovereign: I mean an attachment of sentiment and principle, founded on the sacred and beneficial relation, in respect to you, in which your Sovereign stands, who is as the Apostle emphatically expresses it, "*The Minister of God, to you unto good* *;" not an attachment borrowed from the complexion of the times, such a one in fine as will glow with equal ardor, should that tide of popularity, which now runs so high, ebb with the same rapidity that it has flowed.

The second is to support the Sovereign's Government against all opposition whatever, whether of secret artifice, or open force. This duty requires you, according to the tenor of your oath, to reveal every plot, and conspiracy against the State, that comes to

* Rom. 13, 4.

your

your knowledge, and to respect no connexion or interest of your religion whatever, that opposes the prosperity of your King and country ; for notwithstanding, religion is a business of eternal consequence, yet as you have often heard, *Evil is never to be done that good may come of it*, nor must we pay homage to Satan, with a view of promoting the glory of God. This obedience to his Majesty's Government, includes a proper and legal submission to every ray of the King's power, reflected from even the lowest officer of the State. It is his unquestionable prerogative to appoint his representatives, and the Apostle who assures us, that "*There is no power but from God**", commands us in the same place *to render to all men their due, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor*. On this occasion I must add, particularly with relation to the Sovereign himself, that we are never to disobey his ordinances, on mere presumption of his exceeding his just authority, or upon any ground whatever, short of absolute certainty. This follows from another maxim in morality, which you may have also heard, that *a certain obligation is always to take place of one that is doubtful* : Now, it is certain, that it is our duty to obey our superior, and according to the supposition, we have only a presumption of his exceeding his just authority. Without the observance of this rule, it will be impossible for that just subordination, ever to subsist, which is essential to good government.

* Rom. 13. 1.

It does not however follow from any thing which has yet been advanced, that it is either advisable, or even lawful for Catholics ever to declare themselves of any of those great political parties, which in endless succession follow each other in this free country. In great and momentous questions, as those of State are, prudent and conscientious men will be backward to decide without either evidence on one hand, or a necessity on the other : Now Catholics in general have few means of receiving information in regard to Political Matters, nor are they ever called upon to give their opinions concerning them. You have no legal voice in any public deliberation, not so much as in choosing members for the Council of the State : Any interference therefore on your part, even in the last mentioned concern, would be intrusive, and not making part of your duty, would render you accountable in point of conscience, for any detriment your country might receive, from your happening even involuntarily to promote the interest least beneficial to it. It ought to be our utmost aim *to be permitted to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all piety and chastity**; Nor is it of small consequence to this all-important end, that by the nature of our situation, we are exempt from those dangerous temptations of ambition, flattery, venality, hatred and perjury, which prove fatal to the consciences of so many thousands in their respective stations, who are

* 1 Tim. 2.

exposed to be carried away by party rage. In the mean time, let us judge as favorably as it is possible of all great men, of whatever party, nor do I see any reason why those who move in the highest line of the State, should not be entitled to the same charitable interpretation of their actions and intentions, that we all acknowledge to be due to persons of inferior condition. A warm partizan sees nothing in his political adversary, but the characters of a traitor to his country, and some too sagacious, or too four reasoners conclude, that there is not a spark of true public virtue to be found any where; but may it be permitted to us, till we are convinced to the contrary, to judge more conformably to the dictates of the gospel, viz. that with a mixture of human infirmity, the greater part of public characters on all sides mean well, and have a zeal for the welfare of their country, and that his Majesty may have been served without treachery by all the different administrations he has appointed during his reign.

In the next place, it is evidently our duty strictly to observe the laws, and that *not only from fear*, as the Apostle admonishes*, *but for conscience sake*. Amongst the laws which more particularly fall within the observance of those whom I am now addressing, are those which are made for the protection of the revenue. I know the opinion of many persons of different persuasions is, that

* Rom. xv. 5.

these laws are not obligatory in point of conscience, and I know that a late justly celebrated commentator, and guardian of the laws, has laid down principles, from which this doctrine clearly follows*; but it is necessary for me to observe to you for the regulation of your conduct in this particular, that the opinion directly opposite to the one I have stated, is what has been taught by our most celebrated casuists, and is what had guided the behaviour of all conscientious Catholics. On the same principle it is evidently our duty, to contribute with cheerfulness to the exigencies of the State, considering the necessity we are under of supporting that Government by which we are protected, and that it is only by sacrificing a part of our property, we can preserve the whole from foreign and domestic violence.

* Blackstone, vol. 1. p. 57, says, "It is held, and very justly by our ethical writers, " that human laws are binding upon men's consciences.—It must however be understood, " with some restriction. It holds I apprehend as to rights, and that when the law has de- " termined the field to belong to Titius, it is matter of conscience no longer to with-hold " or invade it. So also in regard to natural duties and such offences, as are *mala in se*, here " we are bound in conscience because we are bound by superior laws. But in relation to " those laws which enjoin only positive duties, and forbid only such things as are not *mala* " *in se*, but *mala prohibita*, annexing a penalty to non-compliance; here I apprehend " conscience is no farther concerned, than by directing a submission to the penalty in case " of our breach of those laws."—Now it is evidently not *malum in se* to import or clandestinely sell tea, liquors, &c. yet I apprehend no conscientious man could reconcile to himself any signal breach of laws so essential to the welfare of his country.

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But in treating of the general duties of a good and loyal subject, let me not forget that which more particularly presses upon us this great day ; namely to offer up our constant and fervent prayers for the safety and prosperity of his Majesty's person, family and government. This is pointed out by the great Doctor of the Gentiles in his epistle to Timothy as a duty of the first consequence. His words are these ; *I earnestly recommend, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all men, for Kings, and for all those who are in high stations;—for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour**. To speak the truth, this is a duty we have never been wanting in ; at no time have we met together to join in the duty of public prayer, without calling on the Almighty in the words of the Psalmist, *O Lord save the King, and hear us in the day that we call upon thee* ; † at no time have we assisted at that *sacrifice and pure oblation* which the Prophet foretold should be offered up in every place amongst the Gentiles‡, but the safety of George our King, of his family, his people, and his armies, has formed one subject of petition in this sacred service. During the late indisposition of his Majesty, you know with what fervor and importunity we called upon the Lord to *remember David and all his clemency*. ¶ Now then that the Almighty has graciously heard our prayers and those of the Nation, on this day appointed for returning

* 1 Tim. 21

† Ps. xx.

‡ Malachy, c. ii.

¶ Ps. cxxxii.

thanks

thanks for the same, on this day of his Majesty's Patron Saint, and that of the Kingdom ; * on this day which I can consider in no other light than as a second Coronation day of a King according to the people's heart, and *according to God's own heart* ; Judge with what redoubted fervor we ought to sing with the same Royal Prophet.† *Lord in thy strength shall the King rejoice, and in the safety thou has wrought for him shall he exult greatly. Thou hast given him the desire of his heart, and thou hast not refused the petition he has made to thee. Thou hast prevented him with the blessings of thy sweetness, and hast placed on his head a crown of precious stones: He has asked life of thee, and thou hast granted him length of days from generation to generation.* In these our fervent prayers, let us, as we have been accustomed, include that virtuous and affectionate Consort, worthy such a Sovereign, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and every other branch

* A certain celebrated Historian, who omits no opportunity of depreciating Christianity, confounds this illustrious Patron of England, and of the most noble order of Chivalry in Europe, whom all historians allow to have been a military man, and not an Ecclesiastic, with the infamous and turbulent usurper of the See of Alexandria in the reign of Constantius. Sensible however of the very weak foundation on which this shameful calumny rests, he is obliged in his notes to allow it to be only a conjecture, after having given it in his text as an absolute fact.

See Gibbon's Hist. of Decline, &c,

† Pf. xxii,

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of the Royal Family, and in short the Nation in general, that the Almighty would deliver them from all evil, and bestow upon them every blessing in this world, and in the world to come, without end.

Now to the blessed and only powerful King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who alone hath immortality, and inhabiteth inaccessible light, be honor and everlasting dominion. AMEN.*

* 1 Tim. vi.

F I N I S.

17 AP 66

